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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 25, 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: U.S. Position on Outer Space

Despite your initiative with regard to the peaceful uses of outer space, and the follow-up by Secretary Dulles, Ambassador Lodge, and Senator Johnson, we have not thus far been able fully to realize the potential of this issue. In the United Nations we have apparently reached an impasse with regard to constructive action on principles which should govern the exploration and use of outer space. While the basic blame for this deadlock must rest on the Soviet Union, the caution which we have observed, for both legal and security reasons, has limited the support which our proposals have received. Also, we have as yet neither made a specific offer for international cooperation nor had a sufficiently dramatic achievement in outer space to give spark to our proposals.

I feel strongly that the question of outer space is of such importance to all the peoples of the world that we cannot afford to lose the initiative in this field. The prospective exploration of space has, per se, a unique fascination for all mankind and is the one big, new, and exciting development of our times that is not inextricably linked to the East-West struggle.

If we are successful to any significant degree in one of our early projected lunar probes, I believe we will have an unprecedented chance to exploit this situation. Should we have a successful lunar probe prior to some achievement of comparable magnitude by the Soviet Union, we would be able to speak from a position of strength. Accordingly, I propose that you consider the following program:

a. As soon as possible after December 5, or whenever we have a successful lunar probe, the U.S. arrange for and announce an address by you at the United Nations General Assembly.

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b. In this address you -

(1) Propose adoption by all nations of the principle that outer space should be reserved for peaceful purposes.

(2) Propose adoption by all nations of the principle that neither the celestial bodies nor the space surrounding the earth can be the exclusive province of any nation or group of nations.

(3) Invite governments of interested nations as well as the international scientific community to participate with the U.S. in the further exploration of outer space.

c. To give substance to this invitation, you offer the use of two or more launching vehicles and the necessary back-up equipment (which could be done at a cost estimated at less than \$10 million), together with increased international access to and cooperation in work on the peaceful uses of outer space.

There are, of course, serious problems involved in making this approach. We would be inviting scientific cooperation in the exploration of outer space before we have fully reliable launching vehicles and thus may encounter failures. We would also be advocating the adoption of principles whose full legal and security implications cannot now be foreseen. However, the speed at which developments are unfolding at the United Nations, the vigorous attempt by the Soviet Union to block our initiative with respect to these developments, and the inevitability of our ultimate acceptance of the principles outlined above, lead me to believe that we must act boldly and soon, if we are to place the U.S. in the position of world leadership in this dramatic new field.

If you believe this general approach to be sound, I would propose:

a. To consult with the Secretary of State as to how best to proceed.

b. Following such consultation, to initiate the preparation of a coordinated position for your use in the United Nations should opportunity afford.



Karl G. Harr, Jr.